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The Fountain of Life

By the same auther

Roti ka Rag (poems)

Manava „

Amar Asha „

Segaon ka Sant (essays)

Jugnoo „

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE



SHRIMAN NARAYAN



ASIA PUBLISHING HOUSE

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"Uttarayan"
Santiniketan, Bengal

January 26, 1933.

Dear Mr. Agarwala,

I am glad to read your poems the
simple charm of which has attracted me. I wish you
increasing success in your literary career.

Yours sincerely,

Abinavath Singh

Shri Ram Narain Agarwala, Esq.,

FOREWORD

I looked through the poems which Mr. Agarwala has written. While I confess that I have little faith in the quality of English poems written by Indian authors, Mr Agarwala's poems impressed me much. The two elements necessary for poetry are authentic experience and control over technique by which we can translate the experience into the language of another dimension, words winged with magic. Judged by these tests, Mr. Agarwala's poems seem to be of real value. With increasing experience and practice, his remarkable gifts are bound to make an impression.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Waltair

14 December 1932

*An Index of First Lines
is given on pp. 77-9.*

I

In the balmy breeze of the tranquil dawn,
Who shall behold the ripples of rapture ?
In the soothing odours of the blooming flowers,
Who shall feel the thrills of ecstasy ?

Come and listen to the songs serene
In the silence of the solemn morn ;
Come and enjoy the beatific dance
In the frolic rhythm of smiling love.

O let me drink to the dregs the blissful Cup,
For out of the springs of the eternal Fountain
Is born the throbbing joy of Life.

2

Look not for my Beloved, O friend,
In the vain laughter of the aristocrat,
In the magnificence of the royal palaces,
And the fervour of an arm-chair politician
He lingers not in your hidden sanctuaries,
And in the frantic shouts of the martyr.

Search not for his abode, O Love,
In the painful penances of an ascetic,
In the vehement applauses of a hero,
And in the trailing clouds of honour
There you shall not find him.

Where misery sits moaning by a river,
And the farmer toils in the raging sun ;
Where hunger languishes for a crust of bread,
And thirst pines away for a drop of water ;
Where poverty lies famished under a tree,
And the untouchable is crushed by a twice-born—
There you shall find my Beloved, O friend,
Helping those who are most helpless.

3

When I pour my love on things mortal,
'Tis that I may catch Thy glimpse
Through their evanescent smile.

I love the tender bud and the graceful flower,
I cherish the wind for its sweet soothing songs,
I dance with the tiny leaves of a happy plant,
And play with the smile of a beautiful child,
To taste the sweetness of Thy limitless love.

O, Thou art mad with the love of all,
And I am mad at Thy madness.

4

In the murky gloom of the dying day,
I heard the cries of falling petals ;
In the weariness of the wailful world,
I caught the sobs of ailing humanity.

Droop not down with woe, my love,
Amid the darkness of fading glee ;
Mourn not the loss of jingling gold,
At the sudden fall of ominous night ;

For each sigh heaved by a moaning heart,
Shall turn into the joy of a radiant smile ;
And every tear flowing down a sorrowful eye,
Shall be a pearl in the Crown of Immortality !

5

I went into Thy garden, O Love,
And sang to each flower of Thy glory ;
Gently did they smile at me with wonder ;
And I was surprised at their muteness.

I went again into Thy garden,
And, Lo ! each flower was Thy fair face.

Again did I visit Thy garden, O Love,
And I saw none but myself,
Singing the songs of Oneness.

6

In the passionate sights of a languishing lover,
Flickers the smile of celestial ecstasy ;
In the selfish sweets of sensual affection
Glimmers the glory of my immortal Beloved.

Out of the boisterous tumult of a raging storm
Is born the calm of a soothing eve ;
Out of the tearful moans of seething sorrow,
Is born the laughter of joyous Eternity !

7

People come and ask,
“But who is God ?”

And I often ask myself,
“But who am I ?”

O Friend, how happy is he
Who knows himself,
For he also knows the Divine !

Let the self mingle with the Self ;
Then, there will be none but the Self !

8

As the sobbing tears of throbbing affliction
Trickle down the languid cheeks of men
And by the sunny smile of marching time
Burst into the joys of tranquil laughter,
So, in the gentle warmth of the pleasant morn,
And the gleaming joy of the balmy breeze
Blossoms forth the imprisoned bud
Into the lovely petals of a fragrant flower.

O, who shall convey to the angelic rose,
The humble feelings of the human hearts !

9

My heart longs for everlasting happiness, O Love,
Where shall I find it ?

“As a river emanating from the snow-clad mountains,
Rushes into the valley,
And then enters the flat plains,
Flowing slowly and silently,
Amid forests and dreary deserts,
Quenching the thirst of the thirsty,
Washing away the filth on the banks ;
And meandering for countless years,
At long last finds its eternal abode
In the vast waters of the unfathomable ocean,
So, my friend,
Gather varied experience in this human world,
Serving and loving all with a living heart,
And then, like the happy river, one day
You shall merge in the ocean of Eternal bliss ! ”

IO

Who shall come and catch a glimpse
Of the ecstatic beauty of my Beloved ?

In the calm of the placid morn,
And the silence of the fading eve ;
In the smile of a mirthful child,
And the sighs of a mourning mother ;
In the laughter of a blooming flower,
And the murmur of a mountain river,
Ever shines the beauty of my Beloved.

For Beauty is Life and Life is Beauty,
And my Beloved is the Life of all things !

I I

Sweet are the songs of tearful sorrow,
For suffering is but happiness in disguise !

Tell me not the flower that once blows
Dies for ever and vanishes into nothingness ;
Let me not concede that life is as the shadow
Of the lonely clouds in the desolate sky.

O Love, there is no death in the midst of life,
For Life is the perfume of blooming Eternity.

I 2

The garden is happy, O friend,
For it is full of lovely roses.

Bees alight happily on the flowers,
And gather honey for their hives ;
The garden smiles and slowly mutters,
“Thank God, I can render some small service.”

At last, dissatisfaction grips the rosy garden,
And it cries out with a heavy heart :
“Alas ! other gardens have flowers of sundry colours,
And I have none but the monotonous rose !
How happy shall I be, O God,
If some roses turn into merri-gold and Jasmine !”

And, then, Nature smiled and slowly whispered :
“Contentment is the essence of joyous living !”

13

Life is but a travesty of Truth, O Lord,
I laugh at the mysterious fun.

Reality ever shines out on all sides,
But humanity fumbles in the darkness
Of profane ignorance and oblivion,
Knowing not the unity of all things.

Truth dances with the leaves of the trees,
And chuckles with the happy child ;
It sings joyously with the rustling wind,
And sighs at the death of the beloved.

Truth has its being in the showers of rain,
In the rolling thunder of the dark clouds,
And in the sombre sea of solitude;
It wanders with the lonely travellers,
And twinkles in the distant stars.

O, Truth ever throbs in the hearts of all,
For who can survive its separation ?

I 4

Alas ! this human world is divided
Into numberless, artificial fragments
Of the same all-pervading Life
That shines in every creature,
And enlightens the hearts of all that live !

This man is rich ; this man is poor ;
This person is the master; this man is his servant!
Ah ! how long shall these heartless divisions continue?

Everyone is rich, and everyone is poor ;
Everyone is a master, and everyone is a servant;
It is the heart or the mind of man, O friend,
Which renders him rich or poor, indeed !

15

As a river that emanates from the snowy peak,
And murmurs down the mountain sides,
With the splendour of its purity,
Rippling through the dark dales,
Singing the songs of immense rapture,
So is the enigmatic flow of life.

The river rushes down the valleys
And loiters listlessly through the plains
With faint whispers and mysterious songs.
It glides down to the limitless Ocean,
Losing itself in the boisterous waters ;
And yet it moves on for ever !

As is the river, so is human life,
A flow of strife towards Oneness !

I 6

Whither, whither, drift these flitting clouds,
Hurrying along like the waves of the sea ?
O, how swiftly the river moves on and on,
Like the happy days of smiling youth !

Blessed be the wind that rustles whistling,
Over the hills and dales and fields,
I alone linger with the moaning pleasures,
Clasping the self at the call of love.

As I pass along the gorgeous lanes of aristocracy
And cast my eyes on the magnificent edifices,
With the entrancing jingle of lustrous gold
Echoing in the corners of my ears,
I hear the laughter of the haughty princes,
The happy chuckle of the vain millionaires,
And the incessant chatter of the idle rich,
Drowning the woeful moans of abject poverty,
And throttling the passionate cries of iniquity.

O, when shall the lofty edifice totter down,
Into the impetuous stream of subdued sobs?
When shall the tears of misery be dried
By the skirt of benevolent aristocracy?

Not till the mighty hand of Love moves its magic wand,
Over the deafening tumult of lustful frenzy!

18

I have a garden of my own, O friend,
Where there is a mass of colourful flowers.

I hear the joyous songs of the youthful bloom,
And the fading cry of the falling petals;
The bees commune with all flowers but one
That knows not the sorrows of autumnal death;
It gives out perfumes of unending rapture,
And radiates the beauty of shining Eternity.

The bees are the mind of man, O Love,
And the illustrious flower, the Self.

19

O Love, sing to me the songs of sorrow,
For sorrow is the glorious balm of life !

O sing of the withering petals and the moaning flower;
Sing of the sobbing child and the sighing lover ;
Sing of the throes that thrive on the poor,
Sing of the silence that sleeps over the dead. ,

O, let me hear the songs of aching tears,
That I may behold the dance of life in death !

20

The freshness of the sacred dawn
Has thrilled the tissues of my being,
But the mouldering of the day's glory,
Towards the dark shadows of the evening,
Brings untold tears to my eyes.

The happy chuckle of a beloved child,
Fills my heart with joy and ecstasy,
But its withered face in the sable shroud,
Pierces my bosom through and through.

Ah ! my heart is broken into two ;
Shall I laugh with the one,
And sigh with the other ?

21

Happy are those who have known their hearts
To be the reservoirs of all bliss !

Unevading happiness and equanimity
Is to be found neither in riches nor in sanctuaries,
Neither in rites nor in ceremonies ;
Neither in the mortification of the physical,
Nor in the embellishment of the body.

Real Happiness is the limpid stream
That flows forth unhampered
From a pure and a noble heart !

22

I looked towards a lonely star,
And wondered at its brilliance,
For we droop like a withered flower,
In the midst of desolation.

I looked again towards the vast sky,
And saw innumerable bright companions,
Smiling at the once lonely star !

Is solitude but a probation, O Love,
For the blissful boon of abundance ?

Ah ! the glory of Motherhood !

But how shall I describe her glory
When mine soul is unknown to me ;
My own Soul shall I find afore,
My mother's glory therein to see.

For my soul is hers, and hers is mine,
The mother is the soul and not the body !

24

A gardener plucked many comely flowers,
And placed them in his basket.

'I shall keep the flowers till evening,' said he,
'For it is noon, and I must sleep ;
A beautiful wreath shall I prepare, then,
To adorn the hair of my beloved.'

The gardener woke up at the fall of eve,
And took up the basket of flowers;
But all the flowers had withered away,
Giving to the garden a desolate look.

A warm tear rolled down the gardener's cheek,
For in the loss and sorrow of others, O friend,
True happiness who has found ?

25

The graceful flowers that wave over the gentle breeze of the morn
And the smiling trees that dance in the flow of fragrant wind ;
The mighty billows that ever roll in the boisterous Ocean,
And the lofty mountains that rise above the deep valleys—
Are not these, O Love, but the different poses
Of thy Eternal Dance ?

The gleam of joy that shines in the ripples of laughter,
And the scourge of death that haunts a drooping willow ;
The thrill of rapture that vibrates in the heart of a poet,
And the rankling fear that throbs in the heart of a sinner—
Are not these, O Love, but the various phases
Of thy everlasting rhythm ?

Through the flowing tears of joyous affection, O friend,
Who shall behold the ecstatic dance of my Beloved ?

26

In the calmness of the evening, O friend,
I lost the glimpse of my Beloved.

Blow, O thou joyous, fragrant wind, blow,
And with the gentle touches of thy being,
Thrill the tender leaves and the lovely flowers,
That I may behold the glory of my Beloved.

As the green leaves dance in joy,
Under the charm of thy rapturous flow,
So, the blissful lustre of my Beloved's beauty,
Ever shines out in all things !

Knowest thou not, O brother,
The body is thine animal, the horse,
The temple of thy heart,
The abode of the immortal soul within ?

Thou art not the physical body that wears out
And is swallowed by the ravages of time ;
The undying soul that ever lives and loves
Is thine true Self of unfathomed glory !

O, the glory of the brilliant sunset !

As the clouds meandering in the vast blue sky
Reflect the illustrious rays of the sun,
With the beauty of their resplendent being,
So, let me radiate the joys of affection
With the purity of my heart
And the happiness of my soul,
Inspiring those that are depressed,
Under the heavy weight of life's toil.

O, the splendour of the tranquil sunset !
It is to me the radiant face of my Beloved
Warning me at the fall of darkness.

29

The lover that sleeps leaning against the grave of his beloved,
And poverty that lies withered in the lap of death ;
Sorrow that haunts the heart of fading pleasures,
And hatred that throttles the chuckle of smiling love ;
Gnawing worry that broods over endless anxiety,
And soothing calm that throbs in joyous peace;
Cunning thoughts that soar in the dead of night,
And pious hopes that wait on noble endeavour—

In all these, O friend, who shall feel and hear
The serene song of Eternal Silence ?

As a beautiful bud of rose
Conceals in itself a lovely flower,
That shall give joy to weary travellers,
And beautify the ugly surroundings,
So true and eternal happiness lies hidden,
In the recesses of thine own heart ;

Let thy heart blossom forth
Into an exquisite flower of Divinity ;
And it will give out entrancing fragrance
Of unending bliss and eternal rapture !

31

The lofty summit of the snow-clad mountain
Is the crown of my Beloved ;
I will climb to it, O world,
Even at the cost of my life !

Let the birds cease to sing, if they will,
Let the flowers give out nothing to me,
Let the clouds pour rain over me heartlessly,
And yet, O world,
I shall not remain away from my Beloved !

My Beloved is the beloved of all ;
He shall fill my heart with peace Eternal !

I love the storm with its dust and fury
When across the world it blows,
For it blends the segregated beings,
Into a harmonious unity of life.

The dust casts a veil over the face of Nature,
And the yellow wind unites the earth with the sky ;
I see Unity flowing through the Universe,
Embracing all beings in the glory of Oneness.

O Love, I cherish the storm
In the core of my humble heart,
For it reveals to me Thy true being !

33

Ah ! the glory of the aged !

All the sorrows and the pleasures of the past,
Undergone by these fathers old,
Are vividly engraved on their wrinkled faces
By the vigorous hand of youth and age.

Happy are those who read these characters,
Formed by the wrinkles of the old ;
So many precepts do they contain,
Which save the young from future despair !

34

She was chaste,
And loved only one flower,
That stood at her cottage door.

I passed by her half-tumbled hamlet,
And could not get a glimpse of her beauty;
Then I cast a glance at the comely flower,
And caught a flicker of her radiant smile.

Slowly did she chant a song of unity,
For Love came between and made them one.

35

Shall I squander away my love,
And pass into the golden cloud of wisdom?
Or cling to the beloved everlastingly,
And let the floating clouds saunter away
Into the lands of life's secrecy?

Ever shall I adore my heavenly love,
In the silver lustre of the clouds,
And behold the glory of the mysterious,
Through the locks of her glistening hair;
For wisdom and love are as the two wings
That shall lift me to the heights of ecstasy!

As a deer is entranced by the sweet smell of the musk,
And wanders hastily here and there
In wild zeal and infatuation,
Knowing not that the ecstatic fragrance,
Flows out from his own being,
So do human beings wander in all directions,
Roaming in the galaxy of the unessentials,
In quest of the ever-lasting happiness,
Knowing not that Heaven lies in their own hearts !

37

Hail, O New Year, hail !

The birds sing of thy matchless charm,
And the buds bloom into smiling flowers,
The wind rustles in its whistling glee,
And the rivers murmur their gentle mirth.
In the hour of thy glory, O lovely year,
The very Nature seems to dance with rapture
The happy and joyous rhythm of life !

Every fresh day is sweet, O Love,
But the New Year's Day is sweeter,
For it warbles out its melodious lay
Of vibrant hope and thrilling cheer !

As a bird cannot fly with one wing alone,
And soon drops down on the ground,
So, O brother,
There can be no service without love,
Nor any love without service !

Love and service are the two wings
Of the blissful heart ;
Absence of the one
Is the death of the other !

39

He smiled and said to his friend,
'God has grown very old,
'And may pass away any time ;
'I will apply for the post,
'And may get in.'

The friend laughed heartily,
At this funny talk.

Yesterday, a Sannyasi came to his friend's door,
Radiant with the light of Divinity ;
He fell down at his holy feet,
And looked towards his shining face.

The Sannyasi smiled and slowly whispered :
'Friend, I have got the post.'

Solicit not the favour of sages and saints, O friend
They cannot plead for you against the Divine Laws ;
Spirituality defies all bribery.

As a miserable man
Who feels terribly the pangs of hunger,
Must extend his own hand, move his own mouth,
And satisfy his hunger,
So one who ardently aspires for real happiness
Must struggle himself ceaselessly.

Self-struggle is the secret, O friend,
Of the happy attainment of eternal Truth !

41

O Lord, I dreamt a glorious dream to-night !
Thou came to my cottage door
And sang a song of immense rapture ;
My heart leapt up and ran to Thee
To wash Thy feet with the tears of Love !

Thou took me to the mountain top
Where the song of Thy glory thrilled my being ;
I looked beneath into the dark vales
And descried the distant plains and lakes.

Lo ! Thou wert to be seen everywhere,
Throbbing in the hearts of all beings !

I lay by the river side,
Immersed in the solitude of separation.

She came and blushed into a smile,
And I knew not how to greet her !
She put my head into her tender lap,
And I placed her hand upon my heart.

Ah ! the fury of my restless love !
Her lotus-hand withered,
And my heart heaved a deep sigh
For she was no more !

O Love! we shall meet on the Mountain-summit,
When, like the snow, my love
Shall feed many sacred streams,
And blister not the tender hands of my Beloved.

Then, there will be no 'you' and 'I',
For we shall be one with Eternity !

43

My heart is heavy with Thine love,
But the very heaviness of the heart
Means the lightness of my Soul,
For love melts into tears the deep sighs
To wash Thy feet, O Lord.

O, how sordid is the love that clings to love
Only for the sweetness of selfish delight !

44

As a charming flower gives out its perfume,
To every traveller that sits by its side
And knows not the thrall of personal attachment,
So, let my love flow forth, O Lord,
To the hearts of all beings.

O, strangle not my love,
Within the walls of individual affection;
Let it dance with the hearts of all creatures
And sing the songs of blissful freedom !

45

As the tender leaf of a vernal plant
Dances gracefully over the gentle breeze,
And knows not the autumnal sighs and sorrows,
So is he who has reached the garden
Of infinite joy and tranquillity,
And tasted the sameness of Life.

O, how happy is he who is one with Life,
For in the Garden of Life, there is no Death.

In vain did I search for my Beloved,
In the twinkling stars of the blue firmament,
And the charming necklace of lustrous pearls ;
In the tender buds of the lovely garden,
And the chain of dew drops on the morning leaves.

I watched the drops of sorrowful tears,
Falling on the warm and melancholy cheeks ;
I beheld the beautiful rows of bubbles,
Flowing down the murmuring stream ;
I sang heartily of the glory of rain-drops,
Falling from the dark and silvery clouds—
But, nowhere did I catch a glimpse,
Of the bright face of my well-Beloved.

At last, I went to a solitary field,
Where a farmer toiled in the raging sun,
As I witnessed the sweat-drops on his brow,
All my sorrow and disappointment vanished ;
For in those drops of hard labour I caught
The glorious glimpse of my Beloved !

47

I slept beneath a lovely tree,
Dreaming of the object of my love.

They say the moon peeped at me
Through the green leaves of the tree,
And soon slipped behind the clouds,
Lest I should remove the veil of sleep,
And catch a glimpse of her fair face.

O gentle and loving moon,
Why behave like a thief?

As is the flower, so is human life,
An emblem of joy and radiant glory !

The canker of hate that eats out the rose,
And the chill of apathy that mars its freshness ;
The fury of the 'self' that withers its petals,

And the frost of jealousy that blights its very being—
Freedom from these shall invite the glorious bloom
Of fragrant love and unfading beauty.

49

In the sweat of every honest labour, O friend,
I enjoy the perfume of glorious Divinity !

The farmer who tills his field from corner to corner
To feed and clothe his wife and children ;
The mason who lays carefully brick upon brick
To tend his languishing brother at night ;
The clerk who sits at the table from morn to eve,
And serves his aged father and mother ;
The pedlar who roams daily from street to street,
And earns an honest pie at the end of the day—

All these, my love, are the beacons of Light
Amidst the gloom of desolate wilderness !

50

It is not the physical that I hold dear,
O friend,
For it is but the outer garment
That wears out and dies away ;
The Soul that ever lives and loves
Is the object of my heart's adoration.

Physical friendship is but feigning ;
It is the sting of human passion ;
True friendship is between two hearts
That ever remain united.

51

I am in love with human Life !

O, how fascinating is the play of the waves of joy and sorrow !

Why should I search for the flower of Bliss in the holy temples
of the deities ?

Why should I stare at the blue firmament
to see the glory of divine peace ?

Why should I renounce the world of humanity,
and hanker after the Abode of Salvation ?

Why should I visit the places of pilgrimage,
in quest of the Eternal Flame ?

I have found the Infinite, my friend,
in the charming smiles of a child ;

I have beheld the glory of the Divine in the
deep breaths of painful sighs ;

I have experienced the glory of love,
in the homes of relatives, and friends.

O ! the flower of my life has blossomed on
the green tendril of human love.

The rose dances on the fragrant breezes of the morn,
To ~~fade~~ away amid the sultry ravages of the noon ;
The lovely child plays in the lap of the smiling mother,
To leave its withered being in the gloomy hands of Death !

The entrancing bloom of joyous and surging youth
Is trampled under the nailed foot of stern widowhood,
And the ecstatic song of a bird in the shady bower
Is throttled by the heartless arrow of a roaming hunter !

In the grim flow of the stream of Life, O Love,
Who shall behold the ripples of dancing Eternity ?

53

The Real lies embedded in the unreal,
Lest all should behold it.
Is the Real so shy, my Lord ?

O, the real is immune from shyness;
And blushes not at the smile of vain looks;
It is the frail and ignorant humanity
That fights shy of Reality,
Lest it should be dazzled by the Light !

54

As the lotus leaf lets not the water
Touch its tender being,
Though in the water doth it reside,
So live in the world, O friend,
And yet be beyond its entanglements.

Happy is he, O Love,
Who moves in the world like a spider,
Getting not entangled in the numerous pleasures,
Though living cheerfully on the web itself.

55

Often have I pined for the fruit of a longing,
But thou hast never listened to my entreaties.
How happy shall be that day, O Lord,
When I can feel one with every creature !

For, then, shall I know the romance of a child,
And the tender love of a cherishing mother ;
The youthful smile of a handsome prince,
And the simmering heart of starving poverty.

Then shall I chirp like the tiny crickets,
And creep as the worms on the tender leaves ;
I shall wave like a plant in the gentle breeze,
And leap as a deer by the side of a river.

And, at the end, I shall be one with Thee,
Amid the joys of Heaven and life's unity !

We confine our love, O brother,
 To our friends and loving relations,
 And hence the sordid stagnation
 Of resplendent Divinity !

All sorrow and depression
 Betray the want of love,
 For Love repels all tribulations
 And invites joy and intense delight.

Love Nature, O dear brother,
 For the love of Nature
 Means the love of Life itself,
 Thou canst not exclude anything.

Individual love and attachment
 Gather moss of misery and transience,
 But the eternal love of Nature
 Dances on the face of the Divine.

Personal Love and affection,
 Wallow in the swamp of evasiveness ;
 But the love of Nature, O friend,
 Sings the songs of Eternity.

57

O, let me drink to the lees
The joys of my overflowing life !

Let me sing of the glories of my Love,
And stem not the flow of my genial spirits,
For in the gentle beauty of my well-beloved,
I have found the anchor of my soul.

O, come and sing with me the songs of rapture !
Come, and dance with me the rhythm of Life !

58

As the musk melons in a field grow sweeter
When the hot wind blows mercilessly,
So the selfish hearts of human beings
In this wide world, O brother,
Imbibe affection for fellow-beings,
At the heartless strokes of untold misery !

Gather rich experience in the world, O brother,
And fly not away from it into secluded valleys
To attain the permanent bliss you seek ;
He who has attained the climax of experience through suffering
Finds Paradise amid the turmoil of the world !

59

The smile of my mother to me
Is the happiness of my heart ;
O, she is my selfless lover ;
Her can I never forget !

My heart sends out ecstatic thrills
At the sweet caresses of my mother;
But I shall dance with her for ever
If she could love all like me !

I rushed towards the silent grove,
To catch a glimpse of my celestial Love;
But she thinned away in the serene air,
And hurled me on a surge of ecstasy.

I saw her lips flicker with a sweet smile,
Through the verdure of the green leaves,
And the fragrance of the entrancing flowers.

Ah ! will she gather shape again ?

Why should my love be narrowed down
To the deification of one being ?

61

An ant climbed up my bare leg,
And I watched her with intense delight.

Towards the navel
Did she swiftly crawl,
And I smiled and slowly murmured :
'O dear, that is not the way to my heart !'

A tear rose to my sad eyes, O friend,
For the portals of my heart were closed.

A gush of wind brushed my holy guest aside,
And I long wept in solitude.

62

There are many who bear the burden of life,
But the fear of death harasses all ;
One who lives in the Eternal present
Dreads neither life nor death.

I pity those who lose their bodies
And can serve here no more;
But I shed tears at the plight of those
Who have lost *themselves*.

She said, "I will speak to thee no more."
"It is all for the best," whispered I.
Her beauty blushed, but I smiled,
And looked towards the naked heavens.

Yesterday I passed by a lovely rose,
And stretched my hand to pluck the flower ;
But she smiled and I blushed,
For I saw her in the flower.

O friend, tell me,
Who is a true farmer !

He who tills the land
With the material plough of wood,
Sowing the healthy seed therein,
And raising excellent crop
At the end of the season ;
Or he who cultivates his own heart
With the glorious plough of experience,
And sows therein the peaceful seeds of love,
Watering his field with the tears of inner joy?

O, friend, tell me,
Who shall attain eternal peace ?

65

I lay by the side of a beautiful lake
That slept in the midst of Thy glory.

The moon shed her beauty on its bosom,
And the balmy breeze waved its wings
Over the tranquil being of the watery blue.

My heart leapt up and began to dance
On the smooth petal of a smiling flower
That stood silently in the lake ;
But it slipped down and sent numerous ripples
On the calm surface of the sleeping waters.

O, how bitterly I wept in silence,
At my weakness and stupidity !

66

Truth is as a lovely flower,
Giving out its perfume to all beings !

Ever does the aroma of the rose flow out,
But people know not how to smell ;
They waste time in endless watching,
Lest the thorns should prick their cheeks.

Those who have tasted the waters of affliction,
Know the secret of smiling Truth !

Said the Valley to the Mountain :
'I am greater than thee, O friend,
For all the travellers going to thy Peak,
Pass through my sacred lap.'

The Mountain smiled and gently whispered :
'But without the holy Peak of Snow, O Valley,
Thou shalt lose all thy charm.'

The Valley nodded assent
And smiled in silence !

The day dawned and the stately trees
Bowed down to the glimmering sun ;
Birds of varied hues chirped merrily
To welcome the glorious Light of lights.

A vernal breeze from the western vale
Thrilled Nature with its sweet silent songs,
And the bright flowers of the lovely spring
Smiled at the majestic splendour of the sun ;
Radiant clouds gathered on the eastern sky
And drizzled down on the peaceful dawn.

I stood up and bowed with devout affection
To pay my homage to the glittering Light,
And the bubbling fountain of happy tears
Washed the feet of my serene Self.

The holy vision is gone, O Lord,
And I again wallow in the mire of selfishness !

Life is around me and yet
I wander in solitude,
Chanting the tunes of despair.

The Cuckoo warbles its loveliest lay
In the exquisite garden of my heart,
And yet I loiter in the distant lands
To catch one entrancing glimpse
Of the bewitching bird.

O Life of my life,
The Light of my Soul,
When shall I be one with Thee ?

I am a traveller on the road of time,
Lonely loitering in search of His abode.

The darkness is deep and the path is hazardous,
And the instruments of light have I none ;
Oft do I slip and oft do I stumble,
But fortune saves me from the jaws of death.

Thorny thickets prick my flesh with vengeance,
And tear out the garments that protect me ;
Pain has become my life-long companion,
And seething misery, the dower of my life !

There is no food but the heartless suffering,
Choking the vital current of my soul ;
There is no water but the gushing tears,
Drenching the cheer of my heavy heart !

O Lord, when shall my destiny lead me
To the blessed garden of thy blissful Kingdom ?

Gently did He smile and slowly whispered,
"I am the Fountain of universal action."

"Free are the souls that roll for ever
On the ceaseless waves of marching time ;
But it is my Will that ever shines
In the slightest stir of every motion.

"On the lutes of freedom all men play
The notes of glee or groaning sorrow ;
But it is my tune that ever sounds
In the inmost corners of every ear."

O, come and play on the lyre of melodious Life,
For, in the splendour of my Beloved, I feel and hear,
A joy, a mystery and a song.

Like the flush of a man's pride,
The fountain bubbles out in the air,
And then slowly slides down within,
Like the self in the Self.

O, the fountain is the jester of man,
For it mimics his behaviour !

73

It is easy to become a deity, O friend,
But very difficult to function as a man ;
It is always easy to be worshipped and honoured,
But to worship with devotion is a noble art, indeed !

They say God created man in his own image ;
But man, if he so desires and wills
Can recreate God himself, O friend,
And give Him a new form and meaning !

As a river without water,
And a tree without leaves,
A flower without fragrance,
And a mountain without the Snowy Peak
That gives rise to perennial streams,
So is he whose heart sings not
The blissful songs of his well-beloved.

For true love is as the soothing balm,
The source of calm and eternal happiness !

75

Farewell ! Farewell, O friend,
Farewell to thee in the calm of the dawn ;
Farewell to thee, O Farewell,
In the silence of the breezy morn.

Let my eyes swim in flowing tears
With the thrills of love and parting joy ;
Let my bosom groan with the deep sighs
Of despondent sorrow and moaning affection.

But, dance, for Life is a rhythm ;
And sing, for Life is a song.

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